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Practicum Topic: Increasing Water Conservation in North Florida

Practicum Objective: Develop relationships among utilities and water management districts in North Florida

Title: Building relationships to increase water conservation opportunities

Increases in water demands from residential development, agriculture, commercial uses and other sectors put increased pressure on north Florida's aquifers, rivers, lakes, and springs. Demands on the aquifer can be reduced through water conservation.

The North Florida Water Conservation Coordinators Workshop (Workshop) aims to bring together researchers, water managers, local governments and utilities in order to share successes in conservation messaging, education programs, quantification and other tools which may be effective in reducing water use. Often utilities and local governments will have a single individual with water conservation coordination as one of their job duties, so having a network of individuals across the region provides a space for idea sharing and increased effectiveness.

The goal of this NRLI Practicum was to organize and facilitate the first meeting of a quarterly series of Workshops with a focus on providing the space for building a network while also providing useful information on water conservation strategies. We focused on setting the tone and direction of the meeting by asking participants to reflect and write biggest challenge to water conservation upon their arrival. We set group norms for to allow space for all to participate and share ideas. Presentations were followed by small breakout groups to provide opportunity for discussions on the presentations, conservations challenges and opportunities. Future meetings will try to continue breakout sessions to continue providing that beneficial space for small group discussion and sharing creating a well-informed conversation regarding the challenging topic of water usage and conservation in a rapidly developing region.